

Housing Matters



News from your Council



Your Building Safety Managers – staff and residents working together

Tenants Consultative Committee awayday – driving up service standards

Estate Care Transition – service delivery in distinct local patches

My Borough – One resident's inspiration for a vibrant community project

Tenant engagement experts appointed to work with residents





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Hello

Welcome to the Autumn issue of Housing Matters. Staff from Housing Management have been enjoying the last of the summer sunshine and attending community events across the borough to speak with residents about everything from major works to fire safety to Estate Services. In early October, we welcomed 102 staff to the Council as part of the transition to the new Estate Care communal cleaning service. You can read more about this on page 14.

We have also been welcoming hundreds of refugees from Afghanistan to Kensington and Chelsea and our Refugee Support Team have been visiting people in hotels and helping to deliver essential items, such as food, clothes and medication, and get children places in local schools. It's also been fantastic to see local charities and resident groups showing support.

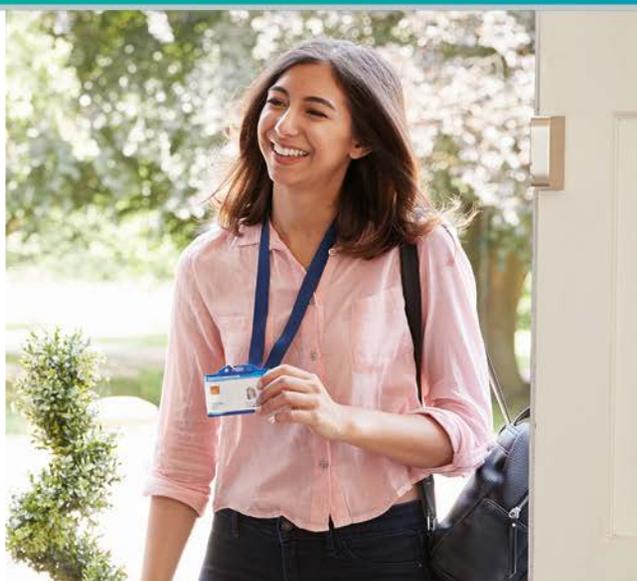
In the last month we have also launched a campaign to raise awareness of Tenancy Fraud and are holding a key amnesty until the end of October where people illegally renting out their Council home, or no longer living there, can hand back the keys to their property with no repercussions. The aim of the amnesty is to recover our properties so we can reallocate them to people in genuine need of a place to call home.

We are making good progress with our New Homes Delivery Programme which will also provide vital homes for local people. The programme will build 600 new homes across the borough, half of which will be for social rent, and will help people on our housing waiting list and in temporary accommodation, as well as delivering a host of community improvements. We have already started work on two schemes at Kensal Road and Hewer Street, and I was pleased to see the planning application to build 11 homes for social rent at Silchester Arches submitted.

Finally, I would like to thank the residents on our Tenants Consultative Committee who attended our recent decision-making morning, (read more about that on page 4) and those residents who have sent in articles for this edition of Housing Matters. I always enjoy reading your stories and hope you will continue to contribute in the future.

Cllr Kim Taylor-Smith
Deputy Leader of the Council

Your service update



Receptions

Our public-facing receptions are open for appointments only. Social distancing measures will be in place, and we will ask you to wear a face covering. If you need to see someone, please make an appointment. Call **0800 137 111** or email **hm-customerservices@rbkc.gov.uk**.

Home Visits resume

Our Visiting Officers have been calling residents who needed support and assistance throughout the coronavirus pandemic. They still have a number of residents they are calling on a weekly and fortnightly basis. However, we are pleased to report the lifting of lockdown restrictions has enabled us to resume our in-person Home Visit service too.

During your Home Visit you will be able to let your officer know about any repairs needed to your home, hear about the services we can offer, get information about any planned work taking place in your area or ask about any tenancy related matter that may be an issue for you.

Visiting Officers will be equipped with Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), such as face coverings, gloves and sanitiser, and will carry ID. If you are not at home when your Visiting Officers calls, they will leave a card letting you know how you can contact them to arrange a convenient time to visit.



Repairs



We are now carrying out routine repairs. If you need a repair to your home but have concerns around Covid, please let us know and we will take extra precautions in addition to what we do as standard.

To report a repair, please visit **www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing/repairs** or call us on **0800 137 111**.

If you have any queries or concerns, please contact us for more information at **hm-customerservices@rbkc.gov.uk** or call **0800 137 111**.

Always Stay Informed

Subscribe to K&C Life, our weekly Council newsletter.



Decision making morning for Housing Management and the TCC



In September, members of the Tenants Consultative Committee (TCC) and senior Housing Management staff met for an 'away morning' in Kensington Town Hall. The morning was independently chaired by the tenant participation and advisory service Tpas.



The purpose of the event was for attendees to think creatively about how the committee can become more effective and relevant to the lives of all residents, and how it can better act as a 'critical friend' to Housing Management by scrutinising its performance and helping drive up service standards. This is increasingly important as the Council seeks to respond to major changes in Government legislation around housing.

A series of lively and positive discussions were held around where improvements to the committee and its functions could be made. Several key actions emerged:

Reassess the purpose of the TCC, and possibly change its title to better reflect its function.

Strengthen the TCC's role in policy formulation and decision making for many years to come.

Develop the TCC's scrutiny function and integrate it with the Council's Housing Scrutiny Committee.

Clarify the place of the TCC in relation to other housing committees, panels, and groups.

Involve a wider base of residents in TCC sub-committees to examine and advise on all aspects of our housing service.

If you are interested in becoming involved in making decisions about the future of your home, or simply curious about what this might mean, get in touch with us at **housingconsult@rbkc.gov.uk**

Is your home insured?

The recent flooding has highlighted the need for residents to insure the contents of their homes.

The Council has teamed up with the Royal Sun Alliance to offer tenants and leaseholders home contents insurance at extremely affordable rates with a variety of payment methods. We strongly recommend residents take out this insurance or with an insurer of their choice. Find out more **www.rbkc.gov.uk/contentsinsurance**

The Council is responsible for insuring the structure and building of all its properties and leaseholders pay towards this cost as part of their service charges. Find out more at **www.rbkc.gov.uk/buildingsinsurance**



Close the door on tenancy fraud

Tenancy Fraud denies individuals and families on the housing waiting list a place to call home. Throughout October, we are running a 'key amnesty' where people illegally renting out their council home can hand back their property with no repercussions.

The amnesty will run alongside a campaign raising awareness of tenancy fraud, which is when someone living in social housing rents out their property

for personal profit, or claims to still be living there when, in fact, they have moved out.

We are appealing to those in the community who may have any information about tenancy fraud to report what they know, but most importantly, those who are committing tenancy fraud, to hand back their keys.

With a current waiting list of over 3,000 individuals and families in genuine need, it's vital we recover our properties from anyone abusing the system.

Hand back your keys

Renting out your Council-owned home without permission is a criminal offence and carries a maximum prison sentence of two years. Up until the end of October, keys can be handed in at the following locations without repercussions:

The Hub, Kensal Road, W10 5BE

**12 Blantyre Street,
Worlds End Estate, SW10 0DR**

**Baseline Studios,
Whitchurch Road, W11 4AT**

The Council will then be able to reallocate the property to those in genuine need on the housing waiting list.

Concerned about tenancy fraud in your area?

If you have any information or concerns about a property that you think could be being rented out for personal profit, or is uninhabited, you can phone **07739 970 860** or email **tenancyfraud@rbkc.gov.uk**. Your information will be kept confidential.



Tenant engagement experts appointed to work with residents on proposed changes to tenancy agreements

Thank you to everyone who shared their views, suggestions, and concerns with us on the proposed changes to the tenancy agreement. The informal consultation period closed on 1 June 2021, and we have now collated the survey results. These showed the majority of tenants who completed the survey were supportive of the proposal.

To ensure that we take on board all the feedback we have received, we have taken steps to further refine the proposed changes and work with residents who still have worries and concerns.

This includes appointing an independent facilitator to work with a group of interested tenants over a period of six months, to look in detail at the existing tenancy agreement, the proposed changes, and the results of the consultation.

We understand that this seems like a lengthy process, but we want to get this right and work collaboratively with tenants on finalising any changes we make.

The independent facilitator we have appointed is Tpas, who are leading tenant engagement experts that promote, support and champion tenant involvement and empowerment in social housing across England.

If you can spare a little time and would like to be a part of our working group with Tpas, please get in touch. This group is open to all Council tenants.

To what extent do you support the proposed changes to the Tenancy Agreement?	
Strongly support	26 per cent
Somewhat support	40 per cent
Not sure	20 per cent
Somewhat oppose	4 per cent
Strongly oppose	9 per cent

* 1 per cent did not respond.

Whilst the survey results demonstrated support for the changes, during some of our feedback sessions we heard from residents who said they did not fully understand the proposed changes and had concerns it would affect their security of tenancy. Others were strongly opposed to some of the finer detail in the proposal.

Call us on **0800 137 111** or email **HM-NeighbourhoodBusinessSupport@rbkc.gov.uk**.

MEET THE TEAM



It's always great to put a face to a name, especially when the person is new to the organisation and delivering services directly to the community.

Amanda Nelson is our new Neighbourhood Management Team Leader and is responsible for managing our front-line service to residents in the south of the borough. She is based at the Blantyre Office and leads a team of five Neighbourhood Services Coordinators.

"I joined Kensington and Chelsea Council in July 2021 having previously worked for other London Councils. I am passionate about delivering an efficient and effective housing management service and I'm looking forward to being part of a team that achieves results and benefits for residents."

You can contact Amanda by email at amanda.nelson@rbkc.gov.uk.



Are you a leaseholder struggling with services charges?

The upcoming capital investment programme will deliver significant improvements and benefits to many leaseholders across the borough.

While investing in our property will bring huge benefits, we are aware that in some instances, due to the extent and complexity of the works, leaseholders will be faced with bills for major works and may therefore need more support and time to pay.

We've updated our existing payment options to meet this need and developed partnerships with specialist debt advice agencies, including the recently brokered 'fast-track' service with the local Citizens Advice Bureau. We've benchmarked with other London boroughs to ensure our offer compares favourably.

We're also making sure that adequate support is available for leaseholders struggling to pay and our aim is to:

- ensure our terms of repayment are ethical, sustainable and minimise hardship to leaseholders.
- encourage leaseholders to contact us promptly to discuss available options.

If you need our help, we are here to support you. Please remember that we have a duty to collect payments in a timely and efficient manner. This will ensure future programmes of works are not compromised in any way.

Please contact our Income Team Manager peter.mair@rbkc.gov.uk if you have any questions.

Capital works update

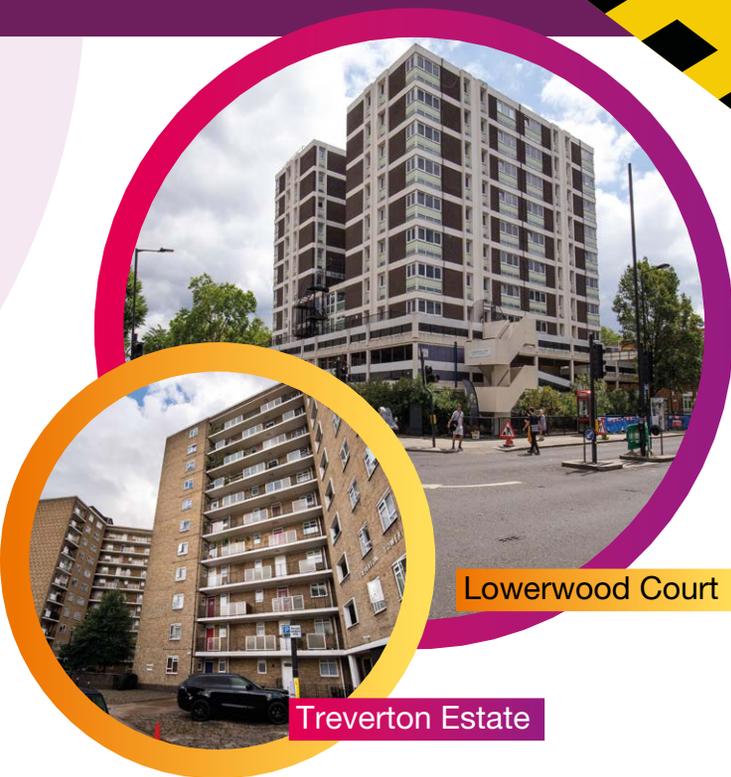
In 2018, when the Council took back management of its housing stock from the Tenant Management Organisation, we committed to an ambitious seven-year plan to improve residents' homes and bring them up to standard. Financially, we have currently committed £374m to the project.

Our focus is to carry out works that address health and safety issues first, followed by exterior building such as roofs, windows, and balconies, and mechanical and electrical work such as boilers and door entry systems.

Sustainability

The Council has reviewed various schemes to find ways to incorporate sustainability measures into the works already planned where possible, to make our homes future-proof and energy efficient given the Council's ambition of achieving net zero emissions by 2030. Some schemes already being implemented include using double glazing in our window replacement works and carrying out studies on boiler houses to see which sustainable options are practical and achievable.

Leading the way on becoming a carbon-neutral estate is Lancaster West. We have been working with the Lancaster West Neighbourhood Team to apply for relevant funding as it becomes available for energy-efficiency measures including bio-solar rooftops at Camelford Court, Clarendon Walk and Talbot Walk, which will generate thousands of pounds worth of electricity per year.



Lowerwood Court

Treverton Estate

What's happened so far

Seventeen projects have already been completed including communal smoke and heat alarm installation in over 200 blocks, communal ventilation cleaning in all properties on Manchester Drive, installation of heating and hot water controls at Trelick Tower, and individual heat and smoke alarm upgrades in over 500 properties.

Various schemes are moving through resident consultation, feasibility surveys, consultation with leaseholders, tender, and contract award stages.

Currently, work is ongoing at several sites including Jean Darling House and Runcorn Place (new lifts) and 10 different blocks/street properties (roof and window works, and wall refurbishments). We've also installed new doors in over 2000 flats to improve fire safety and completed two refurbishments of void properties, with another three undergoing work now, to make them fit for new families.



Elm Park Gardens

We have projected that we will be on site with numerous new projects in the 2021/22 financial year, including at World’s End Estate where we are installing new door entry systems to improve security, and Lowerwood Court and Elm Park Gardens where we are replacing some of the lifts. Major external and internal works are also due to start at Hesketh and Runcorn, Eardley Crescent, Philbeach Gardens, Notting Barn Estate and Treverton Estate.

Adair and Hazlewood

Adair and Hazlewood Towers are some of the first buildings to get contractors on site for major works, including external fabric work and large void reconfiguration schemes.

Since work began this year, residents have benefitted from new lifts being installed and a new concierge office being built with additional, and more modern, CCTV cameras.

Residents have also been involved in the design phase for upcoming works such as external insulation, replacement windows and new balcony doors.



Adair Tower

Resident Engagement

It’s important we hear the opinions of residents on the works we are proposing to carry out and what they would like to see. We have been engaging with residents through consultations, task and finish groups and more informal drop-in sessions and events.

Residents have also been helping us carry out evaluations of contractor’s tenders and, as works advance, we will be inviting residents to join us on site to see our progress and the quality of the works.

Investing in residents’ homes and putting local people at the heart of decision-making are key priorities for the Council. Over the last two years we have worked with residents to form a joint asset management vision for the Council and residents. This vision underpins the draft asset management strategy that has been developed with residents from the Tenants Consultative Committee (TCC) and details how we will plan and deliver on future investment in both existing and new homes.

Social Value

For large-scale public sector procurement contracts, all companies bidding to undertake the work must tell us how they will add social value to the local area through funding, and carrying out, estate improvement projects. These projects could, for example, provide employment opportunities for local people, support disadvantaged groups, or help improve the environment.

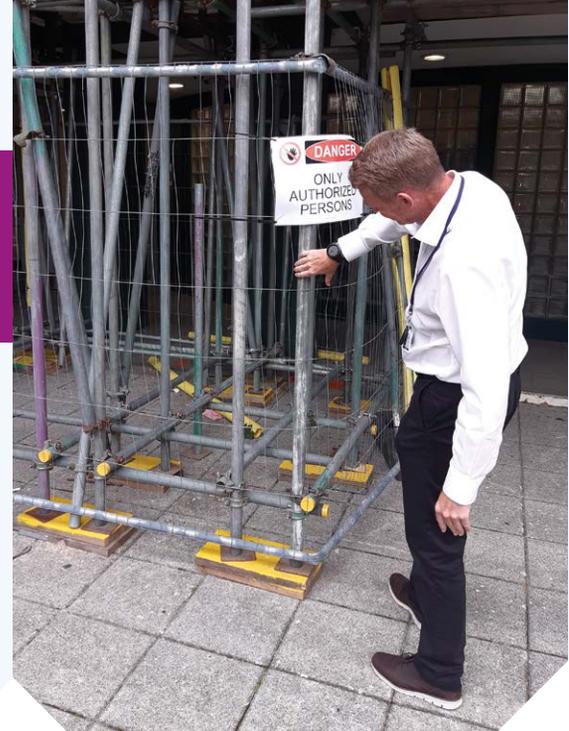
To assist our negotiations with prospective contractors, we are asking local residents what type of project they think would benefit their estate the most. We are currently in the process of gathering opinions from residents living on the Silchester and Swinbrook estates.

For more information email capital.investment@rbkc.gov.uk

INTRODUCING YOUR

Building Safety Managers

If you haven't met your Building Safety Managers yet, then let us introduce Emma Burdett and Daniel Sheridan who are already at work overseeing the fire and structural safety of your buildings. They have joined Kensington and Chelsea Council in advance of the new Building Safety Bill being introduced by Government.



Emma and Daniel will be making sure that your building meets and maintains the most stringent safety requirements. For example, they'll make sure there is clear signage throughout the building, emergency exits are free of obstruction, structures don't pose any danger or risks, and repairs and alterations made to the building don't impact current safety standards.

A typical day for Emma and Daniel will see them visiting estates, identifying issues and finding solutions that work for everyone.

They'll be responding to any concerns raised by residents and working with them to understand how the service can be improved. Emma and Daniel want to make sure that staff and residents work together as partners to tackle issues and identify solutions.



"Residents are the first to experience issues with their homes and neighbourhoods. Very often they have the solutions and insightful ideas about how to solve problems or make improvements. By working together, we will be able to improve and develop our services to better meet the needs of those who live in council properties."



"We really want to make sure that residents always have the opportunity to influence the way we deliver services and have a clear pathway to communicate their concerns. We're determined to make sure that 'engagement' isn't something which occurs at set times but is part of everything we do."

If you would like to raise any issues or have suggestions about building safety, please email buildingsafetymanager@rbkc.gov.uk

Mongolian Community Organisation



My name is Enkh-Oyun and I've been a resident of Silchester Estate since 2007 where I'm a member of the Residents Association Committee.

I was born in Mongolia and brought up in London by Mongolian parents who came here in 2000. My Mongolian heritage has always been of great importance to me and having had children I am keen to pass on my heritage to them.

Witnessing the horrific fire at Grenfell inspired me to do something for my community and I decided to form the Mongolian Community Organisation. Its aim was to create a focus for the small and scattered Mongolian community in London and provide a space where children could experience Mongolian culture.

Housing Management provided us with a hall where we met on Saturdays and Sundays, and held Mongolian language classes as well as the chess club and abacus classes which are an important Mongolian tradition. Over the years we added further classes to meet the needs of our community such as English and ESOL lessons, and a women's empowerment group.

Each month we host an event. So far we've hosted a food event, a Mongolian product event, art displays as well as Mongolian New Year and Christmas and New Year parties.

I hope to continue to develop the organisation and am proud to contribute to the diversity and vibrancy of the Borough and London.

Enkh-Oyun

Resident of Silchester Estate

If you would like to attend an event or know more about the Mongolian Community Organisation, please contact enkhoyun@gmail.com

Struggling with your energy bills?



We can help

Your local energy experts - the Green Doctors - are offering phone consultations to help you save money and stay out of debt.

This consultation is provided by a registered charity for anyone on a low income or over 65 or with a long term health condition or disability.

Your Green Doctor will help you

- Save money on your energy bills
- Switch energy providers to save you money
- Access the Warm Homes Discounts
- Apply for grants for energy or water debt
- Get additional support

Book a phone consultation or refer someone else!



0300 365 5003



greendoctors-london.org

There is no charge for this service
Even your phone call is free!



Green Doctors are part of Groundwork London, a registered charity No. 1121105





A new Resident's Compact for Holmefield House

Toby joins fellow residents Arsiema, Nick, Sunbo, and Stephen, as founding members of a new Holmefield House compact.

“I grew up in North Kensington, and since being housed here in 2015 I've been struck by two things: on the one hand, a palpable sense of community; on the other, a widespread feeling that the Council doesn't care about us, the ordinary residents who make the borough the beautiful place it is.

We are incredibly lucky to have such a broad range of lived experiences, and when it comes to what we want for our home we have far more in common than not. These shared interests could form the foundation for a powerful citizen-led body.

If you are anything like me, approaching the Council for anything short of a full-on emergency can seem pointless – and for any one of us alone, in my experience, it usually is. We all have horror stories about the Council and TMO, and many of us feel the priority of our local government is not to help its less privileged constituents but, at best, to manage us.

We, however, have a power they don't: each other. The more we band together, pool our wisdom, and speak with one voice, the more we can shape our community in ways we all want. The more you feel that getting involved is pointless, the more we need you!

At Holmefield House, we look forward to working with Housing Management in cases where our interests and the Council's align – and, perhaps more importantly, when they don't.”



“Here at the Council, we know we're not perfect, but we're committed to improving our service by listening to and working with our residents. I'm really pleased the residents of Holmefield House now have a passionate and enthusiastic compact to represent them and I look forward to working with them.

Doug Goldring, Director of Housing Management

To find out how you can join, or set up a residents' group email housingconsult@rbkc.gov.uk

Estate Care transition begins

On 1 October we welcomed 102 OCS staff to the Council in the first stage of the Estate Care service transition.

Staff attended an induction session at Kensington Town Hall and were greeted by Cllr Kim Taylor Smith, Doug Goldring and Bernadette Fry. Feedback from our new staff members has been positive and they are excited to be part of the RBKC team.

Julio Apignanesi, Caretaker at World's End Estate said: "Estate Care will be better for sure. We must all work together to make this happen because it's a big change. But I think the residents are really going to see the improvements"



During this stage of the transition, the communal cleaning service will be organised and delivered the same as now while staff training and restructuring takes place.

A key feature of bringing the service in-house is the ability for our Estate Service team to directly manage and promptly respond to issues or urgent requests. While your cleaners will continue to work to existing schedules, they can deliver a responsive service that adapts to the needs of the estate each day. For example, in the instance of a spillage, you can either report it directly to your cleaner, or call their line Manager who will contact the cleaner for you (Manager contact details will be posted on notice boards in blocks over the coming weeks).

This flexible service is available to residents now, and moving forwards we will invite feedback from residents to help us improve schedules to include seasonal or other necessary cleaning tasks. Over time this will shape the cleaning rota and offer site specific, patch-based service. Other one-off or larger cleaning tasks will be reviewed, and where possible delivered as part of the current service.

During the six month transition period we aim to complete our re-structuring to amalgamate cleaning and caretaking and to provide residents with a dedicated Caretaker working across a smaller patch, to deliver a holistic service. Estate Care was designed with the help of a Resident Steering Group who offered valuable contributions and feedback and helped shape the service.



This summer Estate Services have been informing residents about the communal cleaning transition at many community events across the borough.

Members of the team have been joined by their colleagues in Capital Works, Neighbourhoods, Fire Safety and Resident Engagement, meeting residents and providing a friendly face for them to raise concerns or ask questions in person.

For more information email **dennis.paul@rbkc.gov.uk** or call **0800 137 111**



Feel safe at home with a Community Alarm

The Community Alarm Service (CAS) provides an emergency response service 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to anyone who feels vulnerable or at risk.

Many of our residents rely on our service to live independently, safe in the knowledge that they can get help when they need it. CAS provides peace of mind for you, your family, and friends.

How does it work?

- An alarm is installed in your home, together with a pendant button for you to wear.
- In an emergency, you press the button on your pendant, and this will alert the control centre.
- A member of staff will talk to you and arrange the appropriate help.

For details of our current prices, please get in touch with the Community Alarm Service by calling **020 7605 6509** or emailing **HM-cas@rbkc.gov.uk**.

A service you can count on



The Kensington and Chelsea Community Alarm Service (CAS) was formed more than 30 years ago and has grown to provide a monitoring installation and response service used by approximately 1,000 Kensington and Chelsea residents.

CAS received a glowing 100 per cent compliance rating in every area of the most recent audit carried out earlier this year by independent auditors TEC Quality. No areas for improvement were identified and the report stated it was “evident” our culture was to provide a “high-quality service” and we were “committed to improving the lives of our service users”.

You got mail

Sign up for Housing Matters by email



If you would like to receive your Housing Matters by email drop us a line at **Housing.Matters@rbkc.gov.uk** Tell us your name and address or give us a call on **0800 137 111** and we'll add you to the list. You'll always find the latest copy on our website too.

Housing Matters



CONTACT US



0800 137 111 or 020 3617 7080

For all enquiries



Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
292a Kensal Road, London W10 5BE



HM-CustomerServices@rbkc.gov.uk



www.rbkc.gov.uk/housing-management



Finished reading me? Recycle me!

YOUR LOCAL HOUSING OFFICES

Network Hub

292a Kensal Road
London W10 5BE
Open weekdays 9am to 5pm

Blantyre Office

Blantyre Street
London SW10 0DS
Open weekdays 9am to 5pm

Lancaster West Estate Office

Unit 7, Baseline Studios
Whitchurch Road
London W11 4AT
Open weekdays 9am to 5.30pm
Email: LancasterWestoffice@rbkc.gov.uk

Arabic

يمكن توفير المعلومات التي وردت في هذا المستند بصيغ بديلة ولغات اخرى. إذا كنت في حاجة إلى مزيد من المساعدة، الرجاء استخدام بيانات الاتصال الواردة أدناه.

Farsi

اطلاعات حاوی در این مدارک به صورتهای دیگر و به زبانهای مختلف در دسترس می باشد. در صورت نیاز به کمک بیشتر لطفاً از جزئیات تماس ذکر شده در ذیل استفاده کنید.

French

Les informations présentées dans ce document peuvent vous être fournies dans d'autres formats et d'autres langues. Si vous avez besoin d'une aide complémentaire, veuillez utiliser les coordonnées ci-dessous.

Portuguese

A informação presente neste documento pode ser disponibilizada em formatos alternativos e em línguas diferentes. Se desejar mais assistência, use por favor os contactos fornecidos abaixo.

Tagalog

Ang impormasyon sa dokumentong ito ay maaaring makuha sa iba't-ibang format at wika. Kung kailangan niyo ng karagdagang tulong, mangyari lamang na kontakin kami gamit ang mga detalye sa ibaba.

Spanish

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